

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UNGA, XF

SUBJECT: STATEMENT BY GOVERNOR SCRANTON IN GA MIDDLE EAST DEBATE

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT MADE BY GOVERNOR WILLIAM W. SCRANTON IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY DECEMBER 9 IN EXPLANATION OF VOTE ON RESOLUTIONS UNDER ITEM ON SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

2.QUOTE

AS WE MOVE THROUGH THE FINAL DEBATES OF THIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION, WE ARE ALSO APPROACHING THE END OF A VERY DIFFICULT PERIOD IN THE HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE EAST -- THE YEAR OF THE TRAGEDY OF LEBANON. I WANT TO EXPRESS MY GOVERNMENT'S PROFOUND GRATIFICATION THAT THE LONG TRAVAIL OF THE PEOPLE OF LEBANON IS DRAWING TO AN END. WE WILL GIVE EVERY FEASIBLE SUPPORT TO PRESIDENT SARKIS AS HE FACES THE TASK OF THE RECONSTRUCTION OF HIS COUNTRY, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN LEBANON -- ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, ITS POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE AND ITS NATIONAL UNITED PRESERVED -- WILL RESUME ITS PROUD AND UNCLASSIFIED

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RIGHTFUL PLACE AMONG THE NATIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

IN THE CALMER ATMOSPHERE IN THE AREA CREATED BY THE HEALING PROCESS NOW GOING ON IN LEBANON, IT IS NATURAL THAT ATTENTION IS TURNING AGAIN TO THE OVERRIDING ISSUE IN THE MIDDLE EAST -- THE NEED FOR PROGRESS TOWARD A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT THAT HAS SO LONG BURDENED THAT REGION, AND WITHOUT WHICH NO PERIOD OF CALM CAN ENDURE. THERE IS TODAY, AND WE WELCOME IT, FRESH INSISTENCE THAT THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS RECOMMENCE, AND A SENSE OF IMPATIENCE WITH THE STATUS QUO WHICH WE SHARE WITH THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT. FOR OUR PART, WE BELIEVE CONDITIONS ARE NOW CONDUCTIVE TO THE RESUMPTION OF EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE UNDERLYING PROBLEMS BOTH OF LEBANON AND OF THE REGION AS A WHOLE.

WE WELCOME THE RECENT ENCOURAGING STATEMENTS OF PRESIDENT SADAT OF EGYPT AND PRIME MINISTER RABIN OF ISRAEL AND HERE IN THE UNITED NATIONS, I FOR ONE WAS ENCOURAGED BY SOME OF THE COMMENTS MADE IN THE MOST RECENT MIDDLE EAST DEBATE, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF THE JORDANIAN AND THE ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVES. AND NOW IN THIS DEBATE WE HAVE WITNESSED A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE -- THE INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS ADVOCATING A PEACE CONFERENCE BY BOTH EGYPT AND ISRAEL.

IN THE PAST, EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST HAVE OFTEN SEEMED TO RUN AHEAD OF DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO SHAPE THEM INTO A PEACEFUL COURSE. THIS NEED NOT AND MUST NOT BE THE PATTERN FOR THE FUTURE. OUT OF THIS CONVICTION WERE BORN THE UNITED STATES INITIATIVES IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 1973 WAR, TAKEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE PARTIES. THESE EFFORTS HAVE YIELDED THE FIRST TANGIBLE, PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARD AN AGREED SETTLEMENT IN NEARLY THREE DECADES OF FIGHTING AND UNEASY TRUCES. THE THREE AGREEMENTS REACHED IN 1974 AND 1975 ARE PARTIAL AND INTERIM ACCORDS, BUT THEY HAVE HELPED GIVE SUBSTANCE TO THE FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATION ESTABLISHED IN DECEMBER 1973 IN GENEVA. THEY HAVE BEGUN TO BUILD PATTERNS OF COOPERATION, OF INTERACTION, OF NEGOTIATION WHICH ARE NECESSARY PREREQUISITES TO SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT.

MR. PRESIDENT, A NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL TAKE OFFICE IN WASHINGTON ON JANUARY 20. OBVIOUSLY, I DO NOT SPEAK WITH AUTHORITY ON THE DETAILS OF ITS POLICIES. THERE IS, HOWEVER, UNCLASSIFIED

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CONSISTENCY IN THE APPROACH OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE MIDDLE EAST WHICH REFLECTS PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES ENJOYING OVERWHELMING PUBLIC SUPPORT IN OUR COUNTRY. WITH FULL CONVICTION AND CONFIDENCE, I THEREFORE SAY TO THOSE PARTIES WITH WHOM WE HAVE WORKED IN THE MIDDLE EAST TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF PEACE THAT THEY CAN REST ASSURED WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THEM IN THIS VITAL EFFORT IN THE MONTHS AND THE YEARS AHEAD. MUCH HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED ALREADY. MUTUAL COMMITMENTS

HAVE BEEN MADE TO PURSUE THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, AND THERE IS A BALANCED AND COMPREHENSIVE FREAMWORK IN THE FORM OF RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 WHICH CONTAIN THE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS FOR THOSE NEGOTIATIONS. THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT NOW ABANDON ITS DETERMINED AND URGENT SEARCH FOR PEACE. WE WILL PERSERVERE AND WE ARE CONVINCED THAT A SETTLEMENT WILL BE ACHIEVED. THE ALTERNATIVE IS UNTHINKABLE.

I TURN NOW TO THE RESOLUTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION IN CONNECTION WITH OUR DISCUSSION OF THE SITUATION. THE OMNIBUS RESOLUTION IS SIMILAR IN MANY RESPECTS TO A RESOLUTION WE OPPOSED LAST YEAR. WE SHALL DO SO AGAIN. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE BALANKET CONDEMNATIONS OF ONE SIDE CONTAINED IN THIS RESOLUTION ARE WARRANTED OR WILL HAVE ANY POSITIVE EFFECT. NOR DO WE SEE ANY LOGIC IN A CALL ON ALL STATES TO DESIST FROM SUPPLYING MILITARY AND OTHER AID TO ONE SIDE BUT NOT TO THE OTHER. THE UNITED STATES CANNOT SUPPORT AND WILL NOT BE GUIDED BY THIS PROPOSAL IF IT IS ENDORSED. THIS RESOLUTION ALSO LACKS BALANCE IN ITS REFERENCE TO THE POTENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A PEACE. ONE SIDE CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO GIVE EVERYTHING AND GAIN NOTHING.

THERE IS NO REFERENCE (1) TO THE END OF THE STATE OF WAR, (2) TO AN AGREEMENT WHICH PROVIDES NOT ONLY FOR THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE PALESTINIANS BUT FOR THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL AS WELL, AND (3) TO THE RIGHT OF A FREE AND INDEPENDENT ISRAEL TO EXIST IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

THIS RESOLUTION CONTAINS A REQUEST TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL THAT CARRIES AT LEAST THE IMPLPLICATION THAT SOMEHOW IT OUGHT TO IMPOSE A SETTLEMENT ON THE PARTIES, AND THAT THIS SHOULD BE DONE WITHIN AN "APPROPRIATE TIMETALBE", AS IT SAYS. THE PARTIES TO THIS DISPUTE HAVE ACCEPTED THE FRAMEWORK FOR A NEGOTIATING PROCESS

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WHICH IS AIMED AT PRODUCING AN AGREED SOLUTION. THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED -- A MUTUAL COMMITMENT TO NEGOTIATE, RATHER THAN TO RELY ON TIMETABLES OR IMPOSE SOLUTIONS. THE SECURITY COUNCIL HAS IN THE PAST AND CAN IN THE FUTURE MAKE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS EITHER APPROPRIATE OR PRACTICAL TO LOOK TO THE COUNCIL TO IMPOSE ITS WILL ON THE PARTIES TO THE NEGOTIATIONS.

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THE TEMPTATION TO WRITE PRESCRIPTIONS IN ADVANCE IS A NATURAL ONE, BUT IT IS ALSO DANGEROUS. SUCH PRESCRIPTIONS, HASTILY FORMED, CAN CLOSE THE DOOR TO PEACE RATHER THAN OPENING IT -- BECAUSE THERE ARE STILL DIFFERENCES AMONG US AND ESPECIALLY AMONG THE PARTIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE DISPUTE AND THOSE DIFFERENCES CAN ONLY BE RESOLVED BY NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THOSE PARTIES. WE CANNOT WRITE A PEACE AGREEMENT HERE, NOT AMONG 146 NATIONS, NOR CAN WE BRING ABOUT A DETAILED PRESCRIPTION FOR THE PROCEDURE FOR RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WITHOUT RAISING THE POSSIBILITY OF ALLIENATION OF ONE OR MORE OF THE PARTIES, WHICH WOULD DOOM THE CONFERENCE BEFORE IT BEGAN.

THIS BRINGS ME TO THE SECOND DRAFT BEFORE US, RESOLUTION A/31/L.27. THE MOTIVATION AND A GOOD DEAL OF THE RESOLUTION ITSELF IS CONSISTENT WITH OUR VIEW OF THE URGENCY OF RESUMING THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. WE ARE COMPELLED, HOWEVER, TO VOTE NO BECAUSE OF SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN TWO AREAS. FIRST, THIS RESOLUTION SETS AN ARTIFICIAL DEADLINE FOR RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. THIS IS NOT A MATTER FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BUT RATHER FOR THE PARTIES THEMSELVES TO DECIDE. IT ALSO SETS OUT A TIME FRAME FOR A MEETING OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL,

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A DECISION WHICH WE BELIEVE SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO CONSULTATIONS

AMONG COUNCIL MEMBERS IN LIGHT OF THE SITUATION AT THAT TIME AND NOT PREJUDGED BY THIS ASSEMBLY. SECONDLY, THE REQUEST TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO RESUME HIS CONTACTS WITH THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT IS PHRASED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO IMPLY THAT THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE ONE OF THE PARTIES CONSULTED IN PREPARATION FOR RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. WE BELIEVE THAT THE QUESTION OF ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS AT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IS ONE WHICH CAN ONLY BE ADDRESSED BY THE ORIGINAL PARTICIPANTS THEMSELVES.

AND NOW THE UNITED STATES IS IN A SPECIAL POSITION WHICH WE RECOGNIZE CONCERNING THIS PARTICULAR RESOLUTION AND, INDEED, WITH REGARD TO THE RECONVENING OF THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE -- A POSITION WITH WHICH ALL OF YOU ARE INTIMATELY FAMILIAR. A NEW UNITED STATES ADMINISTRATION WILL TAKE OFFICE IN WASHINGTON ON JANUARY 20TH AND WE, THEREFORE, DO NOT CONSIDER IT APPROPRIATE TO JOIN NOW IN A DEFINITION OF DETAILED OPTIONS OR TIME LIMITS GOVERNING THE EVALUATION OF THIS CRUCIAL NEGOTIATING PROCESS, THE PROCEDURES AND TIMING OF A RESUMED GENEVA CONFERENCE ARE MATTERS WHICH RIGHTLY MUST BE DETERMINED BY THE PARTICIPANTS THEMSELVES AND BY THE CO-CHAIRMEN. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY A QUESTION WHICH WILL BE ADDRESSED BY THE NEW AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION. ACCORDINGLY, WE WILL VOTE NO ON THIS RESOLUTION. HOWEVER, IN SO DOING WE JOIN WITH ALL THE REST OF THE NATIONS HERE REPRESENTED WHO SINCERELY DESIRE THAT NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT RESUME PROMPTLY, AND THAT PEACE BE THE RESULT THEREFROM FOR ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE MIDDLE EAST,

IN THIS CONNECTION, MR. PRESIDENT, I WOULD LIKE TO RECALL THE WORDS OF SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER IN SPEAKING TO THIS ASSEMBLY ON SEPTEMBER 22, 1975:

"IN THE MIDDLE EAST TODAY THERE IS A YEARNING FOR PEACE SURPASSING ANY KNOWN FOR THREE DECADES. LET US NOT DOOM THE REGION TO ANOTHER GENERATION OF FUTILE STRUGGLE. INSTEAD, LET THE WORLD COMMUNITY SEIZE THE HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY BEFORE IT. THE SUFFERING AND BRAVERY OF ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE MIDDLE EAST CRY OUT FOR IT; THE HOPES AND INTERESTS OF ALL THE WORLD'S PEOPLE DEMAND IT. THE UNITED STATES PROMISES ITS FULL DEDICATION TO FURTHER

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PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE."

THOSE WORDS HAVE GAINED IN URGENCY IN THE MONTHS SINCE THEY WERE SPOKEN, BUT THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PEACE STILL REMAINS WITH US.

AND NOW, MR. PRESIDENT, I ASK FOR THE INDULGENCE OF THIS BODY FOR A FEW MOMENTS MORE TO RECOUNT A PERSONAL

EXPERIENCE. SOME OF YOU MAY REMEMBER THAT IN 1968 THERE WAS ALSO A CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATION IN THE UNITED STATES, THAT I WAS SENT BY THE THEN PRESIDENT-ELECT ON A SHORT MISSION TO THE MIDDLE EAST. UPON RETURNING FROM CONSULTATIONS WITH LEADERS THERE, I REPORTED THAT MANY BELIEVED THERE WAS THEN AN OPPORTUNITY FOR NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. SOME EXPERTS AND SOME OF US NON-EXPERTS AGREED. SUCH NEGOTIATIONS DID NOT MATERIALIZE. HISTORIANS MAY ARGUE FOREVER AS TO WHETHER OR NOT AN OPPORTUNITY WAS MISSED. BUT THAT EXPERIENCE OF DISAPPOINTMENT RUNS DEEP IN MY MEMORY AND LINGERS ON AND ON.

RIGHT NOW THERE APPEARS TO BE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY. MANY EXPERTS AND MANY OF US WHO ARE NON-EXPERTS BELIEVE THAT NEGOTIATIONS ARE POSSIBLE NOW AND SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN. APPARENTLY MORE ARE OF THIS OPINION NOW THAN IN 1968. THE POSSIBILITY IS EXCITING. IT'S ENTICING. EVEN TO THE POINT OF A GLEAM OF HOPE OF AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT. AND WITH THIS EXCITEMENT COMES A NEW RESPONSIBILITY -- A DEEP AND ABIDING RESPONSIBILITY TO US ALL IN THIS BODY. RHETORIC FOR HOME CONSUMPTION, POLEMICS FOR HOME HEADLINES SHOULD BE AVOIDED. IN ADVANCE OF NEGOTIATIONS BEGUILING PRESCRIPTIONS FOR RESULTS THAT WILL BE YOUR WAY, OR MY WAY, OR OUR WAY CAN BLOCK THAT OPPORTUNITY FOR NEGOTIATION. THE SLIGHTEST ERROR, A MIS-STATEMENT, A MIS-MEANING HERE CAN RUIN THAT CHANCE.

I KNOW, IT IS NO TIME FOR LECTURES EITHER, ESPECIALLY FROM AN AMERICAN WHO IS IN COMPARATIVE SAFETY THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY. NO LECTURE TO AN EGYPTIAN OR A SYRIAN OR A JORDANIAN OR AN ISRAELI OR A PALESTINIAN WHO HAS LIVED ON THE BRINK OF WAR OR EXPERIENCED WAR ITSELF OVER DECADES, AND WHO EVEN TODAY WONDERS "WILL IT COME AGAIN NEXT YEAR, OR NEXT MONTH, OR NEXT WEEK, OR TOMORROW?" THIS IS NO LECTURE

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I SIMPLY REQUEST WITH ALL MY HEART THAT WE ALL THINK BEFORE WE SPEAK NOW, THAT WE ALL THINK BEFORE WE ACT, SO THAT LIKE THOSE OF US WHO HAD SOME HOPES IN 1968 WE WILL NOT WITNESS AND FEEL OUR HOPES DASED.

PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEMAKING ARE VERY DIFFICULT; THEY ARE VERY TENUOUS EFFORTS. NO ONE KNOWS THAT BETTER THAN MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS. IN COMPARISON TO LASTING PEACE, WAR COMES ALL TOO EASILY.

SO LET US WORK QUIETLY FOR NEGOTIATION TO BEING, SO THAT PEACE MAY COME.

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